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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000139

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SUBJECT: KIRKUK POLICE SAY SECURITY SITUATION DETERIORATING

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CLASSIFIED BY: Jim Bigus, PRT Leader, POL, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: According to police, the security situation in Kirkuk province has reached new lows. IP forces were taking major casualties and the Sadr group was encouraging movement from the south to areas in southern Kirkuk in an attempt to ignite tensions between Sunni and Shia groups. Terrorist groups had successfully infiltrated the IA and IP forces and the Mujahedeen Company, Al-Tawhid al Jihad, Ansar al-Sunna, Ansar al-Islam, and Takferyeen were the primary terrorist groups in Kirkuk. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) On July 24, IPA0 met with Brigadier General Serhad Qadir who is responsible for all the police stations and districts of Kirkuk province outside of Kirkuk city proper. He said that he commanded more than 5,000 police officers and he discussed the deteriorating security situation in Kirkuk and provided detailed information on the groups he believes are primarily responsible.

SADR AND ISF INFILTRATION TO BLAME

13. (C) The security situation was degenerating and for the first time groups were attempting to destabilize the area by igniting tensions between Sunni and Shia groups in Kirkuk according to Qadir. He believed this was primarily the work of the Sadr movement who were encouraging migration from the south to areas in southern Kirkuk. Qadir also noted an increased effort from the Sadr group towards recruitment of dissatisfied Shia Turcoman. He said that Shia were expelled from the Hewija area of Kirkuk and that Sunni and Shia have recently begun killing each other, which was unprecedented since Operation Iraqi Freedom in Kirkuk.

14. (C) Qadir believed that terrorist groups had successfully infiltrated and weakened the IA and IP forces and that over the past six months these subgroups have become more active and bold. He referred to a recent major battle where several IP members were killed and three coalition soldiers were wounded. After the battle the forces discovered they were fighting elements of the IA. Qadir says he began developing a list of "bad seeds" within the IP and IA and that he planned to give the list to Coalition forces. He said from April 1 to June 1, 2006 that 189 IP members were killed and 384 wounded in Kirkuk province. He did not have statistics yet for June and July but believed those numbers have increased significantly in the past two months. He noted this as a specific problem because these officers were not being replaced and this loss weakened the

police to a high degree.

PRIMARY GROUPS RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTACKS

15. (C) Mujahedeen Company: This organization was well organized with a strong budget, according to Qadir. It was composed from former elements of the Iraqi police and army under Saddam. He said the group received funding from former Ba'ath party members, Syria, and Iran. When asked why they would receive support from their former enemy (Iran), Qadir discussed the recent capture of Iranian intelligent agents in Kirkuk. He stated that under questioning the agents said they were willing to provide support because the failure of the coalition forces was more important than their hatred for each other. Qadir said that this sentiment was reinforced from several other sources including terrorist leaders who stated that the Ba'athists were working with Iranian support and that they have two major goals: to defeat the American forces and to cause sectarian strife in Kirkuk. (Note. There have been recent reports that the Mujahedeen Company has expelled Shia citizens from Hewija, a Sunni stronghold in Kirkuk. End Note.) Led by former army officers it also contains elements of Saddam's Fedaydeen according to Qadir.

16. (C) Al-Tawhid al-Jihad (unified for holy war): This wing of the Al-Qaeda network was headed by Zarqawi and primarily used IEDs in their attacks according to Qadir. He noted this was a group of Sunni hardliners who supported a small number of foreign fighters in Kirkuk city and Hewija. Qadir explained that this group (although perhaps not formally aligned with al-Qaeda at that time) was organized in Iraq prior to OIF and was tolerated by Saddam in order to seem accommodating to Islamic fundamentalism. He made reference to an incident where Saddam's son Uday beheaded several "immoral women" as a way of showing support for this group.

17. (C) Ansar al-Sunna: A mixed ethnic group loosely affiliated

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with Al Qaeda that works primarily for money. This group was formed on a Sunni ideological basis at the higher levels but the majority of its members in Kirkuk were not driven by ideology but by payment according to Qadir. Their primary methods included kidnapping for ransom and cells were organized to carry out static bombings. According to Qadir, they do not generally fight face to face.

18. (C) Ansar al-Islam: According to Qadir this was a Kurdish group based out of the Halabja area. Qadir said the Kurd who was killed with Zarqawi was a known member from the Kahler district of Kirkuk. Qadir believed this group was still run from Norway by Najmuddin Faraj Ahmad (Mullah Krekar). He stated that the group received funding and arms from al-Qaeda. The group was responsible for many attacks in Kirkuk and controlled villages in the Biyare area of the Suren Mountains between Halabja and the Iranian border where approximately 700 members, including dozens of foreigners, operated according to Qadir.

19. (SBU) Takferyeen: The smallest of the groups but one of the most dangerous according to Qadir. This organization encouraged suicide operations, beheadings, and violent acts of an extreme nature. He said that this group was not interested in money and felt that they had a religious duty to conduct jihad. Qadir noted that this group was also connected to Al-Qaeda.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE

110. (SBU) Brigadier General Serhad Qadir has survived three assassination attempts, the most recent being from poisoned sweets provided by a newly married colleague. After the poisoning he was rushed to Germany. After he recovered he returned to his position in Kirkuk. His brother, who was a member of the IP, and six members of his family have been killed in the last three years. He joined the Peshmerga in 1982,

graduated from the Erbil police academy in 1992, and subsequently held progressively responsible positions in the Erbil police department. He was the coordinator between Kurdish and Coalition forces in Kirkuk during OIF. He is supported by the KDP and maintains a close liaison with the KDP Asayish head in Kirkuk.

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